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Zollner Elektronik: Enhancing IT Operations with SAP® Enterprise Support Services

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Company
Zollner Elektronik AG

Industry
High tech

Products and Services
Electronics manufacturing services for consumer goods in automotive, aerospace, telecommunications, medical technology, data technology, and other industry segments

Web Site
www.zollner.de

SAP® Solutions and Services
SAP® Enterprise Support services, SAP ERP application, SAP NetWeaver® technology platform

Providing excellent customer service, continuously meeting market demand, and keeping ahead of the competition through unfailing reliability and controlled processes are key aims for any savvy business. At the heart of these imperatives must be a **strong IT infrastructure** delivering around-the-clock stability, reliability, and availability. To help achieve this goal, German electronics player Zollner Elektronik AG closed an SAP® Enterprise Support agreement – and is reaping a host of benefits.

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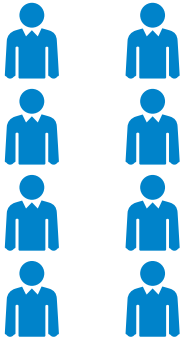
Family firm as leader in electronic manufacturing services

Zollner Elektronik has evolved as a leading electronics manufacturing services provider since its foundation in 1965. It looks back on almost five decades of business success. Worldwide, the high-tech company now ranks among the top 15 organizations in this space.

Committed to developing innovative electronics solutions for the automotive, aerospace, telecommunications, medical and data technology, and testing and measurement industry segments, Zollner Elektronik aims to deliver flexibility, reliability, and value for money. The flexible company offers its services across the entire value chain – from customer-specific design and development of electronics solutions to prototyping, volume production, supply chain management, materials management, and after-sales services. Headquartered in Zandt, Bavaria, Zollner Elektronik operates at 15 sites around the globe, including China, the United States, Hungary, Romania, and Tunisia. The company employs more than 8,000 people worldwide and in 2011 posted revenues of €872 million.



>8,000

Employees

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Reliable IT operations

Zollner Elektronik has clearly defined values that form an integral part of its corporate philosophy. These include fairness, honesty, trust, respect for others, fulfilling social and environmental responsibilities, and delivering high-quality goods and services. Upholding these values is a key part of the company's overall vision.

To achieve these business aims, the multinational player requires a strong IT backbone. "We need stable, reliable systems so we can meet our business goals and offer the quality of service our customers have come to expect," explains Stefan Simmet, head of Zollner Elektronik's SAP competence center.

Since early 2006, a central part of the organization's IT landscape has been based on software from SAP, including all major modules from the SAP ERP application. "Having integrated processes and a largely single-vendor environment gives us greater insight into the business, streamlines operations, and enhances reporting," says Simmet. "But to maintain this level of excellence, we need access to comprehensive support services that allow us to keep our IT landscape running smoothly, continuously enhance it, and help us fulfill our customer promises."

"Our vision in the IT department is to deliver high availability, stability, and reliability across the entire value chain."

Stefan Simmet, Head of SAP Competence Center, Zollner Elektronik AG

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Powerful support for powerful processes

To support efficient IT operations and benefit from a host of additional, value-added services, Zollner Elektronik signed a contract for SAP Enterprise Support. "When it came to selecting the right support option for us, not only did we consider this a cost-efficient model, but we were also attracted by the number and scope of services on offer. We wanted comprehensive support, a single point of contact for our queries, and someone we could communicate with in our own language. This is precisely what this offering gives us," remarks Simmet.

Since the services were introduced in early 2010, SAP Enterprise Support has been helping Zollner Elektronik to plan, implement, upgrade, and enhance its IT solutions, as well as mitigate risk and manage applications. In addition, the company has gained access to on-demand technical support.

The offering allows the organization to optimize its IT landscape during regular, ongoing operations, keeping disruptive downtime to a minimum. Furthermore, it delivers tailored resources and advice about specific projects on a demand-driven basis, and it provides access to a rich pool of knowledge and expertise.

"SAP Enterprise Support services deliver support for all aspects of our extensive SAP software environment."

Stefan Simmet, Head of SAP Competence Center, Zollner Elektronik AG

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Diverse services along the software lifecycle

SAP Enterprise Support services are comprehensive support services that allow Zollner Elektronik to exploit its IT assets to the full. They help the company minimize risk, benefit from best practices, and gain access to high-quality IT resources and methodologies. The services span the entire application lifecycle.

SAP Enterprise Support comprises a set of remote services, including continuous quality checks, which help to identify optimization potential. These include upgrade assessment, support for going live, downtime optimization, data-volume management, business process monitoring, and security optimization. The offering also encompasses the SAP Solution Manager application management solution.

A key feature of SAP Enterprise Support is the support advisory. This 24x7 facility is staffed by skilled engineers and acts as a central interface between customers and SAP. It is often the first touch point when a question arises. "We take full advantage of this service," explains Simmet. "In fact, it was a critical factor when we opted for this support package. Having a single point of contact for all our questions gives us peace of mind. Exchanging thoughts and ideas with a support advisor helps us see whether we're on the right track and allows us to align our views with those of an expert."

"SAP Enterprise Support provides us with rapid advice and assistance on problems relating to our SAP software landscape. This, in turn, helps us deliver reliable IT services to our internal customers and user departments."

Stefan Simmet, Head of SAP Competence Center, Zollner Elektronik AG

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Highly successful upgrade project

IT employees at Zollner Elektronik have put many of the SAP Enterprise Support services through their paces and are pleased with the results. In 2011 the company upgraded its core IT application to the latest version of SAP ERP and performed a Unicode conversion. To help plan and execute this project efficiently, a number of services were deployed, including upgrade assessment, support for going live, and downtime optimization.

"The initial upgrade assessment gave us insight into the entire initiative – from start to finish," recalls Simmet. "It delivered a strong basis for planning and showed us how we could increase efficiencies. The downtime assessment also proved extremely useful. We had a very tight cutover window, and this service helped us meet our targets." In fact, it enabled Zollner Elektronik to reduce the time to migrate critical database objects from 33 hours (consolidation system) to 4.5 hours (productive system).

With the help of SAP Enterprise Support, historical data that was no longer required could be weeded out, reducing database volume by around 5% and accelerating upgrade processes. Thanks to accurate planning, there was no business disruption. "Because we had precise insight, we were able to inform customers, suppliers, and partners exactly when our systems would be offline. We made sure that this was at a time that would not hamper business operations."

Since the application went into productive operation, Zollner Elektronik has been enhancing its new software environment with the help of continuous quality checks like the technical performance optimization service – resources that help Simmet and his team deliver the best possible IT services to the enterprise.

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New ground to explore

Zollner Elektronik is considering new ways of leveraging SAP Enterprise Support. "We touched on data-volume management in the past, but we're ready to expand it," reveals Simmet. Initial tests show that the data-volume management service has potential to reduce the company's extensive database. "That's a significant capacity savings, and we're looking forward to the many advantages it could bring," he adds.

Moreover, IT managers are eager to find out about the expert-guided implementation sessions offered as part of the SAP Enterprise Support Academy program that helps transfer knowledge to customers. "We feel these could benefit us as we are thinking about deploying SAP Solution Manager to a greater extent. All in all, there is plenty in the pipeline, and SAP Enterprise Support can help us explore new ground," concludes a satisfied Simmet.

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